

Social Conflict as a Perspective in Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies

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Abstract

Interdisciplinary studies demand an multiple disciplines understanding across disciplines. The social sciences discipline, the results of sociology research are growing rapidly and have formulated new theories that can be utilized in interdisciplinary studies. Among these is the theory of social conflict. The perspective of social conflict departs from the assumption that inequality exists in all societies. Social conflict theory focuses on various aspects of power status in social positions. Individual identification characteristics are viewed from ethnic or ethnic perspectives, gender, age, religion, expertise, and social status. This social conflict theory can be applied as a perspective in interdisciplinary Islamic studies, this is due to the aim of Islamic studies is to describe the relationship between Islam and various aspects of human life, explaining the spirit (ethos) of Islam in the form of moral and values within Islamic teaching. Thus, approaching Islam through the lens of social conflict theory within Islamic studies got it relevance as Islamic teaching responses to various new paradigms as a result of advances in science and technology and the emergence of new philosophies and ideologies as well as the relationship between Islam and the vision, mission, and goals of Islamic teachings.

Introduction

The development of science is currently experiencing a very dynamic and complex development. Starting from the end of the century, modern science developed rapidly and characterized by their respective disciplines, then developed scientific studies called multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies. This development has implications for the practical application of science to combine itself with new methods. This interrelationship between sciences is then referred to as interdisciplinary science. These interdisciplinary sciences have become disciplines in their own right with their methods.

In the development of science, interdisciplinary research became a popular approach in the social sciences around the turn of the 20th century to the 21st century (Gertrude 2008). Interdisciplinary approach and attention to social problems can be approached from various kinds of science, both socio – religious and technological. The interdisciplinary approach is also called the integrated approach or "correlation" for the inter – scientific approach, while integration is used in the integrated model approach (Klein, 1990). In an interdisciplinary approach, there is a core development based on an integrated approach, the ideal concept from various social sciences or fields of study that have been integrated as a whole so that the material is integrated according to interest. Moreover, they no longer follow the order of the concepts of each science or field of study.

Scientists share the importance of this interdisciplinary approach because of the limitations of research results with a single – disciplinary approach. For example, in studying religious texts, such as the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, more is needed to use textual, historical, sociological, and similar approaches. The aim of Islamic studies is to describe the relationship between Islam and various aspects of human life, explaining the spirit (ethos) of Islam in the form of moral and values within Islamic teaching. Thus, approaching Islam through the lens of social conflict theory within Islamic studies got it relevance as Islamic teaching responses to various new



paradigms as a result of advances in science and technology and the emergence of new philosophies and ideologies as well as the relationship between Islam and the vision, mission, and goals of Islamic teachings (Nata 2011). In this context, this article tries to raise the "theory of social conflict," one of the theories in sociology, which can be applied in the interdisciplinary study of Islam. This paper attempts to discuss some key concepts in social conflict theory: the concept of conflict is the basis of conflict theory. It will then review conflict theory and the relevance of conflict theory in interdisciplinary studies.

Research Method

This research is a literature study uses qualitative methods and literature study techniques. Research materials are based on data collected from various library sources and archives (Benzecry 2020) which discuss the concept and theory of social conflict, especially Karl Marx's theory of social conflict. Furthermore, data related to social conflict theory and Islamic studies are processed using a reflective method, complemented by the 'verstehen' method. The components of the reflective method in this research are description, understanding and analysis of existing Islamic studies as well as to further explore models of applying the social conflict approach in Islamic studies. This paper is expected to explain the position and relevance of conflict theory in interdisciplinary studies.

Defining Social Conflict

Etymologically, "conflict" means quarrel, dispute, or opposition. The term "conflict" refers to some form, idea, or habit that arises within a group, beliefs, or actions of one or more group members opposed by or unacceptable by one or more other group members. At the same time, social conflict is the struggle for agency or power in society. Social conflict or group conflict occurs when two or more actors contradict each other in social interaction, reciprocating social forces to achieve a limited or incompatible goal and preventing the opponent from achieving it (Soekanto 1993). This social conflict occurs in social relations where the action is deliberately oriented to carry out the will of the actor against resistance from certain parties or other parties.

Basic Conflict Theory

An essential point in conflict theory is that interests, not norms and values, give rise to conflict. Efforts to achieve specific interests result in different types of conflicts. Thus, conflict is seen as a regular aspect of social life rather than an abnormal occurrence. Competition for resources is often a cause of conflict. The three principles of this theory are as follows: first, Society comprises different groups and competes for resources. Second, While society may describe a sense of cooperation, power struggles are ongoing between social groups in pursuit of their interests. In society, certain groups master specific resources and means of production. Third, Certain social groups will use the resources obtained for the benefit of the group in order to achieve goals.

This means that those who have no control over resources will be exploited. As a result, many dominant groups will struggle with other groups to gain control. Most of the time, the group with the most resources will gain or maintain power (because they have the resources to support their power). The spirit that those in control remain in control is known as "The Matthew Effect" (Merton 2010). One branch of conflict theory is critical criminology. The birth of this term is based on the view that the fundamental causes of crime are born of social and economic forces operating in a particular society. This perspective came from the German Karl Marx, who believed that the judicial and

legal systems sided with the rich and powerful in a society and that bad people were punished much more severely for much lesser crimes.

Karl H. Marx's Theory of Social Conflict, Background of Thought

Karl Marx is the founder of the theory of social conflict. Karl Marx's real name was Karl Heinrich Marx. Marx was born in Trier, Germany, in 1818. He was born into a family of Jewish clergy. Marx's father, Herschel, was a lawyer by profession. In 1841, Karl Marx completed his studies in Berlin with a dissertation entitled "On the Differences in the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus." Marx blended into the radical community, giving up his dream of becoming a lecturer at the University and opting instead to go into politics. In his intellectual career, he is better known as an economist, philosopher, and activist who developed the sociological theory of Marxism. Regarding the history of humankind, Marx stated that human history is a class struggle, that is, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx further stated that at that moment, the proletariat was aware of the interests of its group and then united and fought against the bourgeois group, which he called class struggle. Ultimately, the proletariat will form a classless or equal society, both superior and subordinate. Marx's ideas on stratification and social conflict have significantly influenced sociological scientists' thinking (Campbell 1994).

Marx on Community Structure

For Karl Marx, society is a construction of human agreement. From this, it can be understood that man can change it. Marx explicitly stated, "They only interpret the world differently, which only needs to change it" (Wallace, Ruth A 1995). With this understanding, society is seen as not undergoing evolution naturally but because there is a human role in it. Marx's view of society differed from that of Auguste Comte. Comte declared that society was an independent entity. Indeed, society comprises individuals, but society cannot be seen as just a collection of individuals. Society is a separate entity that has its laws as well. In his writing, "German Ideology," Marx formulated the fundamental premise that economics determines human thought. According to Marx, he sought to be consistent with his postulates about dialectical matter. For Marx, the primary material was economics. It is these economic conditions that shape a person's consciousness. A person's worldview is determined by his economic status (class position). Someone in a good class certainly has different views and insights from those in the lower class. These differences then lead to conflicts.

In Marx's view, the world consists of interclasses: the lower class (owners of capital) and the upper class (owners of capital). Marx believes the proletariat has no complete, objective view of the world and consciousness. The consciousness of the workers, poor, proletariat, consciousness of the oppressed is false. This false awareness arises because the owners of capital ostracize them with various ideologies. For that, we need a revolution. A revolution marked by trade unions. Revolution means conflict. For this reason, from Marx's perspective, conflict is inevitable and expected.

Marx Historical Materialism

In Marx's view, the history of all societies from time immemorial to the present with the history of struggle, free people and enslaved people, nobles and commoners, enslavers and enslaved people, enslavers and workers, was translated by Marx as oppressor and oppressed, constant with each other, constantly hidden, hidden, or exposed, either in the revolutionary reconstitution of society in general or in the mutual destruction of competing classes (Hobsbawm 1998). According to Marx, throughout the history of the course of human life, matter has been the main determining factor (Turner

1997). Whoever can master material (means of production or material economics), then he can fulfill all his desires. The implication of this view is that existence determines consciousness, not consciousness determines existence. Man is aware of his ideas and thoughts; he is a function of existence in the social structure.

Social Class

Marx always defined his class flexibly (Suseno 2016). Marx's discussion of social class begins with an explanation of the ownership of the means of production, which then became the basis for dividing society into classes. So, every society has a ruling class and a controlled class. In his explanation, Marx referred to two influential classes: the capitalist class and landowners (bourgeoisie) and the working class (proletariat) or those who live by selling their labor. In some of his writings, Marx also mentioned that capitalist society consists of three classes: workers (they live on wages), capitalists (they live on profits), and landlords (they live on rent). In his explanation, landlords in the era of capitalism will be the same as owners of capital. Because of this theory, the state is essentially nothing but a class state; The state is ruled by classes that control the economy. Even if the state performs socially, it is on the goal of people's development and focuses on more fundamental changes (Suseno 2016).

Marx held the view that man can change his destiny. The forces that hinder human freedom must be destroyed through radical proletarian revolution by seizing power. According to Marx, this proletarian revolution can be realized if the proletariat can take over the means of production (factories, fields, machines) and the production of products. Marx stated that the revolution did not use an "anarchist" method but a "dialectical" pattern. A dialectical revolution will not destroy either of the two opposing groups of society (proletariat vs. capital), so it is hoped that the result of the revolution will be integration into what Marx called communist society. In a communist society, everyone has equal rights to the means of production and all the wealth produced by the revolution. So, the ultimate goal of the revolution is to create a classless, free society based on true humanity (communist, socialist society).

Marx's Concept of Alienation

Alienation means a state of feeling alienated (isolated). Marx used the term alienation to describe a form of abuse of the relationship between workers as workers and their fundamental human nature, which is alienated by the capitalist system. In the capitalist system, people no longer see labor as an expression of human purpose. The work done initially to meet human needs turned into enslaving humans with a system of working hours, which was not an expression of human self but turned into a means to achieve another goal, namely the purpose of earning money. So, a person who works in a capitalist industry becomes alienated from himself as a human being.

Alienation, according to Marx, consists of four elements, namely: *first*, alienation from production activities. The worker does not work according to his creative ideas, but he works at the whim and interests of the capitalist who gives him money as wages. Since the production activity belongs to the capitalists, the capitalists decide what the workers should do. As a result, workers are increasingly alienated from certain production activities and jobs without knowing the importance of those jobs. *Second*, alienation from the products it produces. The labor produced by workers does not belong to him but to the capitalist. The capitalists will use their property rights to sell products for huge profits. If workers want the fruits of their labor, they must buy them like any other consumer. They cannot meet the daily needs of their labor and may die if they cannot meet their actual needs in the production process. *Third*, alienation from

fellow workers. Human nature is to work together to get what they command from nature. In a capitalist system, the nature of cooperatives is undermined by the system, specialization, and work purpose. Capitalization creates a system of competition between workers to produce maximum productivity and prevent the development of cooperative relations between workers. This is done to see workers who are productive, faster, and more pleasing to their bosses. Successful workers are rewarded, while losers are eliminated. Mutual competition is common among workers working under capitalists. This competition eventually causes alienation between one worker and another. The production system creates legal demand and supply that keeps employment low because labor supply exceeds capitalization for their services. The more productive workers are in producing goods, the more they will feel alienated from themselves (inability to control their life activities). Fourth alienation from the side of humanity. Work for workers is no longer fulfilling human needs but changing functions and eliminating human nature. Man becomes a production machine that must work indefinitely. As a result, workers cannot express their best potential and abilities (Hendrawan 2016).

In addition to the workers, alienation occurs in the bourgeoisie through dependence on capital, the need for raw goods, capital, and fear of bankruptcy due to intense competition with the rest of the bourgeoisie. This hit the owners of capital during the British Industrial Revolution in the 18th century. They depend on raw goods, capital, and workers for their livelihoods. Thus, capital, raw goods, competition, and the need for money have dominated his existence as a human being (bourgeoisie).

Karl Marx's Theory of Social Conflict

The primary view of Marx's conflict theory is that conflict occurs between two poles of social class in the capitalist system: the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Each class consists of individuals employed by common interests and the means of production. The bourgeoisie is a group of people who represent members of society as holders of most of the wealth and means of production. At the same time, the proletariat is a group of people who only have the energy and do not have the means of production. The proletariat group includes the working, working, or poor classes (Campbell 1994).

Conflict theory focuses on "modes of production". Mode of production refers to certain economic production institutions in society. The mode of production includes the means of production used by the community, such as factories, machines, and materials. *The mode of production* also includes labor and labor force (labor). The term production relations refer to the pattern of relations between the groups that control the means of production (capitalists or bourgeoisie) and the workers (workers or the proletariat). According to Marx, the history of society develops through the interaction between the means of production and *the modes of production*. The way of production continues to evolve towards the full realization of production capacity. This kind of evolution creates antagonisms between human classes determined by the relations of production, owners, and workers (Syam 2022).

The capitalist system is a mode of production based on individual ownership of the means of production. People produce commodities to exchange in competitive markets. Therefore, capitalism can extract as much labor as possible from the workers at the lowest possible cost. The economic interest of the capitalists is to provide workers with the lowest wages, which is enough to survive and produce. The workers know it is their economic interest to prevent the capitalists from exploiting their labor.

The pattern of social relations in production is inherently antagonistic, which gives rise to a class struggle that Marx thought would lead to the attempt of the proletariat to overthrow the capitalists. The proletariat would then replace the capitalist pattern of production with a pattern of production based on common ownership of the means of production, eventually giving rise to the system of communism.

The bourgeoisie controls the means and means of production; this ownership leads to exploitation with the sole motive of profit. In this system, the proletariat relies solely on its sale of energy without owning or controlling capital. Such conditions give rise to false consciousness. Marx used the term false consciousness to describe the inability of the proletariat to understand its proper position in the class system. This constructive constraint in social life prevents workers from joining the class consciousness or the same group identity as the exploited proletariat.

With this system of capitalism, the bourgeoisie uses its influence and power to oppress the proletariat (the majority of the class). This mindset is linked to community-based conflict theory. This view of belief in the pyramid model concerns how goods and services are distributed in society. At its peak, there is a minority elite group that dictates the terms and conditions of the majority of society because they have great control over resources and power. In the class pyramid, a handful of capitalists (bourgeoisie) occupy the top and can arrange the structure underneath. The power controlled by the capitalists is the government with the authority to make regulations and laws that benefit the capitalists. Similarly, the judiciary is an institution with the authority to bring about justice for the benefit of the capitalists. Also, the military institutions have the authority to maintain the security and defense of the capitalist means of production. The owners of capital from the rich are the social classes that enjoy the labor of the proletariat or working class. This is what supports the survival of the capitalist economy. At the bottom layer are the workers (proletariat) who work and feed all the layers above it.

The unequal distribution in a capitalistic society is maintained through ideology: the bourgeoisie without conditions for the proletariat. Conflict theory assumes that elites are pressured to build legal, cultural, and other social systems to support self-domination while preventing others from joining their ranks. Marx's theory states that when the working class and the poor experience poor conditions, the collective consciousness raises awareness of the impossibility of resistance and the possibility of resistance.

Some Assumptions of Karl Marx's Conflict Theory

According to Marx's observations, the history of man's journey towards matter is the main determining factor. The group that can master material resources (means of production or material economics) (Charles 2018). can obtain everything they want. According to Marx, *existence* determines *consciousness*, and not vice versa. Consciousness determines existence. In Marx's conception, man does not express his ideas, but he performs his functions in the social structure to obtain everything he wants. According to Marx, *existence* determines *consciousness*, and not vice versa; consciousness determines existence. In Marx's conception, man does not express his ideas but performs the function of his existence materially in the social structure (Goodman 2011).

Karl Marx explained the process of social conflict from the analysis that social conflict arises because of the injustice of access and distribution of scarce material resources in society. If access and distribution of scarce resources become increasingly

unfair, it will further trigger conflicts of *interest* between the dominant group (superstructure) and the sub-structure group. Marx explained that the more sub-structure groups know their *genuine collective interest*, the more they will realize and question the legitimacy of the pattern of access and distribution of scarce resources that are considered unfair (Wahyudi 2021).

In this case, the sub-structure group will be able to know *its genuine collective interest* well with several conditions: *First*, changes made by the superstructure group damage or disrupt relations between members of the sub-structure that have been well established. *Second*, actions carried out by the superstructure group cause alienation to members of the sub-structure group. *Third*, members of the sub-structure can communicate with each other about the fundamental problems they experience. This condition can be possible if the members of the sub-structure are in the same environment and the members have the opportunity to improve their education. *Fourth*, sub-structure groups can build ideologies that unite their minds. This condition can be carried out if the sub-structure group can recruit and appoint experts who can gather ideology for their group, as well as in conditions of the failure of the superstructure group in controlling the socialization process and communication patterns of the substructure group (Erlangga 2022).

The Relevance of Social Conflict Theory in Interdisciplinary Studies

Conflict is a significant problem in every human society and is often unavoidable. Within societies, conflict is often the result of an interplay of political, economic, and social instability that often stems from poor governance, failed economic policies, and inappropriate development programs stemming from exacerbated ethnic or religious differences in society. Fundamental problems in conflict are religious and ethnic beliefs and practices, boundary disputes, land ownership and resource competition, poverty, marginalization, unemployment, and underdevelopment (Coser 1956). In the social sciences, there have been many studies with several approaches that either refuse to consider or minimize the importance of conflict in society or replace it with a vision of social struggle.

Between these two extremes, there is room for researchers, observers, and social researchers to see conflict as a pattern of relationships; this perspective can distinguish between social conflict and conflict modes involving war and division. Sociology suggests different ways to distinguish different modes of social conflict. The question that can be asked is theoretical but also empirical and historical: Are we not moving from an industrial age dominated by structural social conflicts in which working-class movements confront working lords to a new era dominated by other types of conflicts with a more apparent cultural orientation? Whatever the type of analysis, conflict is different from crisis, although materially, both arise in social reality (Sanderson 2007).

Marxist Approach in Islamic Studies: Hasan Hanafi's Thought as a Model

The Marxist social approach to Islamic studies appears in the thought of Hasan Hanafi, a liberal modernist Muslim thinker from Egypt (Shimogaki 2003). Hasan Hanafi adopted the Marxist method critically in his efforts to reconstruct theology. Issa J Boulatta, in the book "*Trends and Issues in Contemporary Arab Thought*" observes Hasan Hanafi's thought using three principal foundations: (1) Islamic History and Tradition, (2) Phenomenology, and (3) Marxist social analysis (Boulatta 1990). This reconstruction of Hasan Hanafi's theology was formulated while remaining grounded in the historical roots of the Islamic tradition. Formulating a new theology uses dialectical logic that boils down to real action. The basic assumption of this theology is that Islam is a religion of

protest, opposition, and revolution. Islam in Hasan Hanafi's thought contains two meanings: Islam as an attitude of obedience to the upper class and Islam as a revolution fought by minorities and poor groups. In this context, the ruling political regime emphasizes the interpretation of Islam as obedience and submission to maintain the status quo, while in situations and conditions requiring socio-political change, Islam means revolution (Hanafi 1983 and Soetomo 2016).

In the book "*Min al-Aqidah ila Al-Tsawrah*" (From Akidah to Revolution), Hasan Hanafi explains that revolution is neither a mass movement nor a coup nor a military conflict; it is directed at a revolution of thought and culture that can mobilize the mind and actualize ideology. Such a revolution focuses on transforming the passive and static understanding of monotheism into progressive monotheism. In his book, Hasan Hanafi quotes the thoughts of Muhammad Iqbal, a Pakistani Islamic thinker, who states that tawhid is a dynamic revolutionary force. However, the classical understanding of tawhid focuses more on the static understanding of tawhid, limited to understanding nature, *asma* (God Names), and *af'alullah* only. For this reason, using a Marxist approach, Hasan Hanafi emphasized the concept of humanism based on faith and monotheism, faith in the Prophet and the Last Day. For Hasan Hanafi, faith can transform the human mind and soul with the spirit of Islamic humanism (Hanafi 2001 and Soetomo 2016). From the description of Hanafi's thought above, it shows that he made an intellectual jihad through social approach to formulate a new theological paradigm, changing the way of doing theology 'from above' to theology 'from below' (that is, theology from the reality and conditions of real society and humans).

Conclusion

Karl Marx popularized social thought that focuses on social conflict. Social conflict theory, initiated by Karl Marx as a method of social analysis, can be used as a frame in interdisciplinary studies. Marx's conflict theory focuses on the conflict between two main classes in capitalist society: the ruling capitalist (or bourgeoisie) class, which owns the means of production, and the working class (or proletariat), whose labor forces are alienated by the bourgeoisie to make a profit. If strikes and protests challenge the ruling class's power, it can use the law to criminalize those who threaten. Media coverage will be manipulated to give the impression that the interests of the ruling class are the interests of the ruling class and the whole nation. For Marxists, the emergence of consensus is an illusion; It hides the reality of one class imposing its will on another.

The social conflict approach to religion highlights how religion, as a phenomenon of human behavior, maintains social inequality by advancing a worldview that justifies oppression. Marx's critical approach demands that action be taken to resolve social disparities. Marx viewed religion as social control used to maintain the status quo in a particular society. This paper shows that the theory of social conflict initiated by Marx can be used as a frame in interdisciplinary studies of Islam, such as in the concept of Islamic humanism initiated by Hasan Hanafi. The actual form is a transformation from passive monotheism to progressive monotheism. Thus, Hanafi's thought is interesting because it is able to show that humans have ability to transform ideal and conceptual dictrines into real action within social reality.

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